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Redevelopment Board Minutes 12/10/2007

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of December 10, 2007

Members Present: Roland Chaput
Christopher Loreti
Andrew West
Ed Tsoi
Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
Laura Wiener
Joey Glushko

Andrew West called the meeting to order at 7:00 and asked Kevin O'Brien to present a request from Symmes Redevelopment Associates to erect a construction sign at Symmes site as required by Land Disposition Agreement, Section 8.05. The Board suggested some wording changes and then Ed Tsoi moved that the sign be approved as amended. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The Board then requested that Symmes Redevelopment Associates report to the ARB at its meeting on January 7, 2008 and to send a written report prior to that meeting. Report should include efforts to market the medical office building.

The Board then discussed the regulatory documents for the 120% housing at the Symmes site in preparation for their approval of the documents in a January meeting.

Andrew West then introduced Clarissa Rowe, Selectmen and Joe Tulumieri, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss the possibility of changing the Zoning Bylaw to allow accessory apartments in Arlington. It was proposed that an article be brought to Town Meeting to propose a study of the issue. Both thought it was worth considering. The Board asked staff to find out what the incidence of such apartments is in communities where it is allowed. It was proposed that the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, the ARB and the Selectmen all sponsor the article.

Andrew West asked Joe Tulumieri to stay to discuss possible changes to the Zoning Bylaw regarding signs. The Board discussed the idea of having the Planning Department approve signs rather than just review them. Joe Tulumieri liked the process as it existed, The ARB wished to pursue Planning Department approval.

The Board discussed sandwich board signs and generally did not approve of them except for civic groups for special events.

At 8:50 Andrew West asked the Board to consider the 100% drawings for the new development of 1398 and 1406 Massachusetts Avenue. The applicant, Len Bierbrier, with Casey Pichet, were present along with architect David Chilinski, and attorney Dick Keshian. The Board discussed the landscaping plan asking that there be a tree lawn in the front sidewalk and that there be grass in the open space behind the new building, not shrubs. The Board then speculated that the Selectmen's policy regarding brick sidewalks might require that the front sidewalks be concrete instead of brick. Staff will check the Selectmen's policy.

Kevin O'Brien explained that because the development had not begun construction within six months of receiving its permit, it was subject to changes in the Zoning Bylaw regarding its parking and indicated that the submitted plan does not comply. Dick Keshian offered that the permit was actually an amendment of an earlier permit and therefore should be subject to the newer parking requirements. The Board rejected that argument and the developer was asked to change the plan. Bruce Fitzsimmons pointed out that if all the compact car size spaces behind the 1398 building were made full size, the lot would have only two fewer spaces. The Board then looked at the signage proposals and felt it was not specific enough. David Chilinski indicated that they would bring the Board at a later meeting sign guidelines that would cover all signage.

The Board then briefly discussed possible Zoning Bylaw amendments concerning overlay districts and sustainable building techniques.

Kevin O'Brien then asked the Board to consider a request by the Department of Recreation, a tenant at the Gibbs School building. They wish to use the gym for programs on Sundays which use is currently prohibited in their lease (without ARB permission). He reported that the special permit for the building does not prohibit such use. The Board thought that the request could be met and instructed staff to tell the Department that they could use the gym on Sundays from 1 to 5PM on a one year trial basis.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien

